

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5008

As Passed Senate, March 12, 2009

Title: An act relating to hunting licensing requirements for members of the military.

Brief Description: Regarding hunting licensing requirements for members of the military.

Sponsors: Senators Hewitt, Hobbs, Honeyford, Schoesler, Zarelli, Parlette, Stevens, Kilmer, Hatfield, Swecker, Benton and Roach.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Natural Resources, Ocean & Recreation: 1/19/09, 2/25/09 [DP].
Passed Senate: 3/12/09, 44-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, OCEAN & RECREATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Jacobsen, Chair; Ranker, Vice Chair; Morton, Ranking Minority Member; Hargrove, Hatfield, Stevens and Swecker.

Staff: Karen Epps (786-7424)

Background: A recreational license issued by the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) is required to hunt for classified wildlife in Washington. When purchasing a hunting license, persons under the age of 18 must present certification of the completion of a course of instruction of at least ten hours in the safe handling of firearms, safety, conservation, and sportsmanship. This requirement also applies to persons purchasing a hunting license for the first time if born after January 1, 1972.

The hunter education program is managed by DFW. Courses focus on the topics of firearms and outdoor safety, wildlife management, and hunter responsibility. All hunter education instructors are certified by DFW.

Summary of Bill: The hunter education requirements do not apply to active duty military personnel of the United States armed forces.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: CON: There are concerns about setting up an exemption for both policy reasons and practical concerns. Although active duty military have had firearm training, hunter education classes also include species identification, hunter ethics, and a review of Washington rules and regulations pertaining to hunting. There are concerns about how this will be implemented, including whether the active duty military person would need to present proof of that person's active duty status, what happens when someone is active duty military when the person purchases his or her hunting license but is not on active duty when hunting season starts, and whether the person would need to be active duty military for the entire hunting season.

Persons Testifying: CON: Bruce Bjork, DFW.